

21 March 1977

NOTE FOR: Mr. Knoche

SUBJECT: Paper for the DCI on Need for Agency Personnel to Carry Firearms

1. The attached paper responds to a request from the DCI. I have found only one item which I think should be brought to your attention. The following statement appears in the second paragraph on Page 2:

"In bearing arms for this purpose, the members of the DCI security staff are exploiting the lack of a specific legal prohibition against CIA employees carrying arms."

2. The "for this purpose" refers to the fact that firearms are carried for the purpose of protecting the DCI although our charter provides authority only for the protection of classified documents. In the report on his inspection of the Office of Security, the IG referred to the "contrivance" of having the DCI and DDCI carry classified documents so that the carrying of firearms for the purpose of protecting them would technically be covered.

3. I discussed this with Tony Lapham and although he agreed that technically the criminal offense of carrying a concealed weapon might occur if no classified documents were actually being transported, the main concern would be one of civil liability if there were to be an incident or injury. However, he concurred in the paper as written.

4. Although the attached paper does not emphasize the point, the IG report notes a similar absence of authority for carrying firearms for the purpose of protecting defectors or Agency installations. The IG recommended that we seek legislation for expanded authority to carry firearms, but did not recommend that we cease any of the activities described above. Since the paper is an accurate reflection of our current policy and practice, you could either forward it to the DCI as is or recommend to him that we cease use of firearms in protecting defectors and installations until we obtain legislation.

Attachment:  
ER 77-613/1

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*George looks  
okay to me  
but I have  
some problem  
with the middle  
para of p.2.  
I think the  
protection  
of DDCI  
extended back  
much farther  
than "within  
the past  
year." Pls  
check.  
Hn*

DCI

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077-1307

17 MAR 1977

Executive Registry

77-6/3/1

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John F. Blake  
Deputy Director for Administration

VIA : Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Firearms - Need for Carrying by Agency  
Personnel

REFERENCE : Memo dtd 2 Mar 77 for A/DCI from Executive  
Assistant to DCI-Designate

1. This memorandum is for information in response to referent request.

2. The need for Agency personnel occasionally to carry firearms is seen as real although definitely limited. Accordingly, it has been applied over the years in an exceedingly restrained and circumspect manner. The need flows from concerns the Agency has in five areas:

a. Protection of Classified Information

Although Section 5(d) of the Central Intelligence Act of 1949, as amended, authorizes "couriers and guards designated by the Director to carry firearms when engaged in transportation of confidential documents and materials affecting the national defense and security," in actual practice the arming of document escorts is done only rarely in the United States. In recent years the trend has been toward infrequent use of armed escorts except when materials of extraordinary sensitivity are being moved or when the volume of classified materials in movement is exceedingly high.

b. Protection of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI)

The DCI is perceived as a target for unstable individuals, dissident groups, and terrorist organizations.

DCI

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While the threshold of this threat may not be as high as that for other selected federal officials, neither is it insignificant nor safe to ignore. The volume of threatening or disturbing mail addressed to the DCI, i.e., over 2,000 pieces last year, coupled with similar telephone calls gives some measure of the problem. Former DCI William Colby's life was threatened during one of his last official business trips to the West Coast.

The DCI Security Staff works closely with the Secret Service, the FBI and local police units and would, of course, refer an explicit threat against the DCI to such law enforcement organizations. In the meantime, the Staff works to protect against the unexpected and wanton attack. In bearing arms for this purpose, the members of the DCI Security Staff are exploiting the lack of a specific legal prohibition against CIA employees carrying arms. Their intimate coverage of the DCI's daily official movements is believed the minimum necessary to address the relatively low, but credible, threat to the DCI.

Within the past year the DCI Security Staff has been asked to extend its coverage to the DDCI and to the Deputy to the DCI for the Intelligence Community.



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d. Protection of Selected Agency Installations

Most Agency installations around the world are protected by U.S. military personnel or members of the Federal Protective Service. Both groups, of course, are authorized to carry firearms. Three notable exceptions are the [redacted]

[redacted] all of which are guarded by staff employees who carry firearms. These facilities contain great quantities of classified materials related to the national security. To attempt transfer of these protective responsibilities to a military or a law enforcement organization has been described as prohibitive from a cost standpoint.

e. Protection of Selected Agency Personnel Overseas

Firearms are not issued to Agency personnel overseas except in extraordinary situations and then only if authorized by the Deputy Director for Operations, acting on behalf of the DCI. In the instances when weapon authorizations are granted, it is usually in response to a serious threat of terrorism, criminal activity or other specific dangers to personnel and their families.

3. The need for Agency personnel occasionally to carry firearms and the responsibility entailed was studied by the Church Committee which concluded that under certain circumstances there is a need for the carrying of firearms by Agency personnel. In its final report, the Church Committee commented as follows:

"As part of the CIA's responsibility for its own security, however, appropriate personnel should be permitted to carry firearms within the United States not only for courier protection of documents, but also to protect the Director and Deputy Director and defectors and to guard CIA installations." (Book II, page 299)

4. It is considered important that the Agency press for new legislation that goes beyond the CIA Act of 1949 in providing a clear and visible legal basis for the limited weapon use endorsed by the Church Committee.

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ADJUTANT - GENERAL  
WASHINGTON

/s/John F. Blake

John F. Blake

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2 March 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence  
FROM: Executive Assistant to DCI-Designate

Admiral Turner would like to know if a clear need for  
Agency personnel to carry firearms has been established.



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